Christian in Recovery

"A Supplemental Workbook for Individual Counseling Sessions"

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Many people have inspired me to use the scripture to help my Christian clients, among whom are Jeff Baker, Brack Strong, and Gary Sweeten. The work of Gary Sweeten of Lifeway Ministries in Cincinnati, Ohio turned by attention to the scripture basis of the 12 steps program of Alcoholic Anonymous.

Another person deserving acknowledge is Dennis Marrein, author of *The Road to Recovery, Bridge Between the Bible and the 12-Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous.* And, of course, I value the inspiration, and gratification I received as I observed many of my clients. They benefited from our use of the scriptures to facilitate their recovery.

And more importantly I express my gratitude to those who continue to give me much love and support not only in this project, but in my life. My Emma Lee, my children Meghan and Ethan, and my father Donald Allen, Sr. have made this workbook and dedicated to Christ possible.

Include in this workbook are scriptural verse from the King James Version of the Bible. I believe that all the other Christian Bible agree with the beliefs these verses convey. The basic principle of this workbook is that all who suffer from the disease of alcoholism that places their faith in Jesus can use their faith to aid them in their recovery. Thus, while I am a Protestant pastor, I expect all Catholic and Protestants who are chemically dependent who use this workbook to be aided in their recovery. I also expect them to look to their counselor and their priest and pastor for support with the Christian blessing.

And finally, I acknowledge and thank the most important one of all, Jesus.

Introduction

This workbook is designed to help those persons of the Christian faith who are chemically dependent and who are receiving treatment from professionally trained counselor. For you, it provides suggestions and activities to supplement but not replace the other work required by your counselor. It facilitates the support that your Christian faith provides by adding the wisdom of the scripture to the secular knowledge learned from research and clinical experience.

As a person who suffers a compulsion to drink alcohol or consume drugs, you may ask why your Christian faith will help you in recovery. In introducing Dr. Samuel Shoemaker, an Episcopalian priest, to an anniversary convention of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), Bill Wilson, a confounder of A.A. said:

"It is through Dr. Shoemaker that most AA spiritual principles have come." Dr. Shoemaker responded with: "None can doubt that God is what made AA what it is today, what inspires it, what keeps it going … {that} intangible but unmistakable spirit that we have felt again and again … I am thankful that the Church has so widely associated itself with AA, but also because I believe the Church needs AA as a continuous spur to greater aliveness and expectation and power. They are meant to complement and supplement each other"[1]

There is a point to this discussion. If you take advantage of the blessings offered in the scripture and by God, and combine them with what we know about addiction treatment, your recovery will be easier and strengthened.

I now realize that my Creator, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can restore me in Christ (Ps. 27:4-5)

Christian occasionally doubt that the Bible addresses the issue of drugs of addiction. They are wrong. In the originally Greek edition of the Bible, in (Gal. 5:20), the word "Pharmakeia" is used in reference to using drugs to alter a persona's state of mind (Seeds 1998). Certainly, scripture can help us to understand something about the

[1] Reprinted with permission of Augsburg Publishing from, *The Road to Recovery, Bridges Between the Bible and the 12-step Program of Alcoholic Anonymous* by Dennis Morrin, 1990.

problem of addiction. And in this regard, your minister or priest stands ready to assist you – with their support.

Your task in this workbook is to reflect on a number of biblical verses and stories and then complete the exercises. You should complete those exercises under the direction of your counselor who is trained and experienced in addiction treatment. Your counselor, if not a minister or priest, may refer you to one if you do not have a church. If you do not have a church, are encouraged to join one.

Restated, this workbook is a supplementary set of activities. Your counselor will ask more of you. In addition, your, your church group will provide added support. And the return on your faith, time, and effort will be far more than you will spend. You will reap many rewards. As you receive both religious and counselor support, you will greatly increase your chances of recovery.

What will your counselor do to help you? He or she will couple your secular needs with thoughtful discussion and reflection upon several biblical messages. Your counselor will assist you in the following ways.

- To face your addiction in ways you may have overlooked.
- To avoid or overcome pressures and temptation that otherwise make it difficult to control your life-including the intense desire to use alcohol or other drugs.
- To change unhealthy habits
- To gain God's support and the support of others
- To set a long-term course of recovery

In this workbook, for purpose of clarity, you will focus, one at a time on facing your addiction, overcoming obstacles, changing your life style, gaining the support of others, and setting your course for recovery. You should keep in mind, however, that these areas overlap. When you address one, you will be making headway in the other areas as well.

With these caveats in mind, journey with God as you gain your recovery. You may begin this journey by reflecting upon and discussing with your counselor and pastor the implication for you of verses from the Bible. Examples of possible response to these verses are not presented in the workbook because it is important that you first come up with your own responses and then review your responses with your pastor.

There is therefore now condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1)

As you come to each succeeding biblical verse, reflect upon and discuss this implication for you and your recovery. You also should discuss the implication of the verse with your clergy member.

Face Your Addiction

In order to succeed in recovery, you must accept to facts. The first is that you have an addiction, a condition you will have for life. The second is that you cannot successfully handle your addiction alone. You need the support of people and more importantly, you need God.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dewelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dewelleth in me. (Romans 7: 18-20)

Activity 1

Please reflect on the following verses from Proverbs 23: 29-35. Really think about them in reference to your situation. Discuss them with your clergy and counselor. You may have to come back to these verses many times in order to understand their full relevance for you.

(29) Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

(30) They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

(31) Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

(32) At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

(33) Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

(34) Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

(35) They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

Activity 2

Please carefully read and consider the following statement. Note if any of them describe your experiences, and them discuss your responses with your counselor:

- When I have had trouble, felt under pressure or I have had an argument, I sometimes drank (or used drugs) more than usual.
- Now I can drink much more alcohol (or consume more drugs) than when I first began, and not be drunk.
- I have awakened on morning after drinking or using drugs and could not remember part of the evening.
- I have felt guilty (and still do) about my drinking (or drug use).
- I have felt irritated when my family or friends discussed my drinking (or drugs use).
- When sober, I have regretted things that I have done or said while drinking.
- I have failed to keep my promise of stopping or controlling my use of alcohol (or drugs)
- I have tried to avoid family or close friends who do not have a problem with alcohol (or drugs).
- Increasingly, I have had financial problems and difficulties at work because of my drinking (or drug use).
- I have driven a vehicle on the public roads while under the influence of alcohol (or drugs).

Activity 3

Do any of the above statements apply to you? If so describe just one such event below.

Does your recollection of the event you have just described help you, even in the least, to realize that you need help? If three or more of the above statements apply to you have a serious problem. Discuss these events with your counselor.

Activity 4

Please reflect on the following statement, and discuss it with your counselor.

"The pleasure or the reduction in pain and tension that you received when drinking or consuming other drugs never lasted long. Yet the negative consequences in terms of damage to your health or valued relationship lasted and lasted."

Is this statement true in your case? If so, describe to your counselor a number of instances where you caused long-term harm to yourself or others because of a short-term pleasure you received from drinking.

Activity 5

Below are number of chemical agents that can produce addiction. Please check those that you have felt a compulsion to use. If there are others, please add them to the list as well.

- ☐ Marijuana
- ☐ Alcohol
- ☐ Cocaine
- ☐ Crack (a derivative of cocaine)
- ☐ Heroin
- ☐ Opioids (Including such drugs as Vicadan, Oxycodone, Morphine, etc.)
- ☐ Prescription medication (other than physician prescribed)
- ☐ Barbiturates
- ☐ Sleep pills, sedatives (other than physician prescribed)
- ☐ Amphetamines
- ☐ Uppers, speed
- ☐ Nicotine (such as from smoking cigarettes or chewing tobacco)
- ☐ Inhalants (such as gasoline, hair spray, and some magic markers)
- ☐ Hallucinogens (for example, LSD and PCP)
- ☐ Steroids (other than physician prescribed)

□ Other:

_____

Now think about the items you have checked while at the same time consider the flowing verse. Jot down some of your thoughts and discuss them with your counselor.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7)

Activity 6

Please list in order of importance any addictive agents that you have felt strong desire to consume. Be honest with yourself. Again, discuss your desires and the following verse with your counselor. Without honesty, your recovery is a long way off.

1._____

2._____

3._____

4 _____

5. _____

And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaens, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:2-3)

Activity 7

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)

Among most addicted persons who acknowledge their addiction, there are two general sources of their awareness. First, they associate their poor health, suffering, loss of abilities, or bad relationships with their use of alcohol (or drugs). Second, they have been made more aware of their addiction when important others have confronted them about their drinking or drug problems.

Has anyone who truly cares about you suggested that you have a drinking or drug problem? If so, think about who and how many other persons have similarly confronted you. Did you believe what they told you? Did you tell them that you believed what they said about your problem? Did you tell them why? Were you truthful? Briefly describe below the circumstances that caused others to confront you. Then review each of the following three situations with your counselor.

Name of person who confronted you:

_____

The circumstances and your response:

Name of person who confronted you:

_____

The circumstances and your response:

Name of person who confronted you:

_____

The circumstances and your response:

Why do you think these people were concerned enough to confront you?

How did you react to their concerns?

Please discuss their concerns and the following verse with your counselor.

Saul said, Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion (concern) for me (I Samuel 23: 21)

Do they err that devise evil? But mercy and truth shall be to them all that devise good. (Proverbs 14:22)

Activity 8

While the last set of activities in this workbook will address development of a plan for your recovery, it is time for you to lay the foundation for a realistic plan. Carefully think about what you can do to gain control over your problem. Briefly jot down on a separate sheet a number of things you can do to stop your use of alcohol and again discuss them and the following verse with your counselor.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, through we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he is set before us by his servants the prophets. (Daniel 9:9-10)

While you have been responding to the activities in this workbook, you should have begun to face your addiction in greater detail than has been the case in the past. Please be aware, however, that as you proceed in the process of recovery, you will become ever more understanding of your addiction and the demands it places on you. It is now time for you to focus on some of the obstacles you will face as you seek to gain control over your life.

Overcoming Obstacles

With your Christian faith, you can overcome all of the obstacles in your path to recovery.

I can do everything through HIM who give me strength (Philippians 4:13)

Denial

Person with an addiction often deny they have a problem. They also deny the harm they do the self and others because of their addiction.

The first obstacle that you must overcome is to address this denial. This will be difficult. Among addicted persons who move into recovery, there is a gradual shift from denial to recognition of the process and features of addiction. Unfortunately, however, once one has been in recovery for awhile, it is common to slip back into denial and then relapse. For the rest of your days you will need to deal with the potential for denying your addiction and relapsing.

Activity 9

After due consideration, discuss with your counselor events that have caused you to think that you are seriously addicted to alcohol or drugs. And then, discuss what the following verse means to you?

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust (desire for his alcohol or drug) and enticed (James 1:14)

The Residue of Past Hurt Feelings:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people (Matthew 5:23)

Another obstacle to the recovery of many addicted persons is related to the hurt they feel about the harm they have done to others. For example, a person may remember the pain they caused a parent, spouse, child, or other person when drunk. They may remember their

aggression, their failure to keep promises, or their misuses of money. The list can go on, but one thing is certain. As long as there is one person you have hurt, you will have difficulty in having a lasting recovery unless you have made every reasonable effort to amend that injury. Making amends will go a long way toward your recovery.

To make amends, however, will not always be easy because you will feel some of the pain you have caused. Yet your pain will diminish as you try to make amends. More importantly, you also must not forget to make amends with God. Fortunately, God is all forgiving. All you have to do is ask for forgiveness with a sincere heart. On receiving God's forgiveness, forgive yourself.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou will cast all their sins unto the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:18-19)

As quickly as possible, you should attempt to amend the hurt you have caused other. In some cases, a simple apology may be all that is required. With other, considerable time, thought, and effort may be required. Healing varies from one person in another. It may have taken you a long time to have seriously injured your relationship with someone, so you should not expect an acceptance of your apology when first offered. Be persistent and remember that you can take responsibility for what you have done. That is what making amends is all about.

Activity 10

At this point it would be valuable to take time to read Isaiah 24, and discuss with your counselor how as understanding of this passage can help you personally in the process of making amend.

Activity 11

Discuss with your counselor how you can best go about making amend. Before you do this, however, think of several ways that you can amend the one injured relationship that you most regret hurting. Describe below how you ill go about amending that relationship, beginning with how you will apologize.

Temptation

Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:41)

Another obstacle that tends to impede one's recovery is when any person, thing, or event tempts you to again drink or use drugs. Such temptations are sometimes called *"triggers."* For some, trigger to consume alcohol may be simply seeing a bottle of beer or another alcoholic drink. For some, it may be observing friends who are drinking. For some it can be stress. The list can be long and troubling for you.

The problem is that you cannot always avoid events that, for you, a triggers. You may avoid some triggers but for others you must be prepared to resist. Do not think that once you are in recovery there will be no more temptation. Your triggers will be with you for the rest of your life. Your challenge will be to avoid them when you can, and when you cannot, to render them less effective.

The relevance or intensity of various triggers, of course, will depend upon how you think and feel at the time. For example, your risk of relapsing will increase when you think you are cured. Because you have accepted Christ as Savior you may think that you have noting to worry about. If so, you are wrong. When alcoholic believe they are cured they are more likely to experiment, intending to take just one or two drinks. When they do, the probability of their relapsing is magnified. Or they might respond to the pressures of their friends or family members to take just one drink, and then another. They may again feel that drink, will relieve their boredom or stress. An occasion may arise where they think that if they drink in a certain setting their importance to others will be enhanced, or they may feel that by drinking they will get even with someone, perhaps even God. Some may feel that because they have been "good" they owe themselves, "just one drink" as a reward.

You will always remember how good it felt to have a drink or to take drugs. In other words, you should expect there will be an ever present, sometimes subtle, craving to take a drink or use drugs. This craving will never be totally gone from your mind. All such feelings and thoughts and impulse make those who are addicted subject to a relapse if they are not spiritually on guard.

Activity 12

The verse in Matthew 4:1-11 share the story of how Jesus was led into the wilderness to face temptation. The Devil came to face Jesus; he was offering him the world. Three times they faced off, and each time Jesus withstood the temptation that the Devil offered by using the very Word of God. Review this story with your counselor and compare your temptation experience with those that Jesus faced.

In meeting the challenge of addressing your temptation to drink, you must recognize them on a consume drugs. Please list five or more triggers that might most tempt you. You may list people, places, circumstances, or events. Then discuss this list with your counselor.

Please check which of the above temptation present the greatest dangers to your sobriety. Then indicate how you might avoid or deal with this temptation. Again your responses should be discussed with our counselor.

Changing Your Lifestyle

Changing your lifestyle in a healthy manner will require that you admit and learn from your past failures. You know that you cannot change what has happened. You can, however, benefit from examining your past. We all benefit when we work diligently to avoid repeating our mistakes.

The question that you should ask of yourself is whether you have honestly and completely admitted your past mistakes-any mistakes that may have a bearing on your addiction. Do you have a plan to reduce the likelihood that you will repeat these mistakes? Of what relevance to you in not repeating your mistakes is the following verse?

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (Romans 12:17)

Activity 13

Please briefly describe several of the worse mistakes in your life related to your drinking or drug abuse problem and discuss them with counselor. These mistakes may involve relationships, jobs, money problems, and other events.

Activity 14

No story within the Bible is clearer about a single mistake having lasted effect than the one found in 2 Samuel 11. Read the story about David's failure to fulfill his role as leader of the Jewish nation. This includes the aftermath that he faced and his unhealthy behavior with Bathsheba. Then, discuss with your counselor the unhealthy mistakes

you have made and what changes you can make to avoid repeating them (Please limit your answer to one spiritual activity (even though you may use more than one, such as prayer, devotions, and Bible reading) Next, describe what behavioral actions you will take.

As you reflect on what you might do (and before you discuss this with your counselor) you should be sure that your plan involves.

- A change in your environment
- A change in the people with whom you will spend time
- A change in your attitude
- A change in the location where you will frequent

Behind every plan is the anticipation of the future. Luke 15 is a great story of how the prodigal son's life was almost destroyed because of a failure to anticipate the consequences of his actions.

No one knows whether the Prodigal son developed an addiction of any kind. However, the lifestyle he developed was clearly self-destructive, a life that is not unlike that of one who has an addiction to alcohol or drugs. The Prodigal son was a young man who thought he could engage in the sins of the world and not pay the consequences. As a result, he lived a life that was destructive and he eventually found himself living in a pig pen. The Prodigal son, however, was able to rehabilitate himself and return home to be forgiven. You too can return to your spiritual home and he be forgiven.

Activity 15

Have you ever found yourself in a place that surprised and disgusted you after you had been drinking or using drugs? If you answered yes, described when and where. This may have been in any distasteful situation that you did not foresee happening. Discuss this experience with your counselor.

Before the Prodigal son was able to overcome his addiction and get his life back on track, he had to come to his senses. He had to make changes in his lifestyle. Making major changes in one's lifestyle, however, often requires difficult and sometimes fearful tasks. A spiritual reawakening can help one to make these life changes and to confront fearful tasks.

Another example of a successful change in a person's life was Saul to Paul in the book of Acts. He took to heart the change of lifestyle that was asked of him. Saul gave up old friends, he did not

go back to his old hangouts and he struggled daily to live the life that was right. Saul changed the course of history for the good by changing his life. A concern over embracing a more spiritual life was at the heart of Saul’s change.

Activity 16

As you think about making a change in your lifestyle, reflect back again to what tempted you to drink or use drugs. Of these temptations, which one is going to be the most difficult for you to avoid and confront because it will require a major change in how live your life? What will give you the strength to avoid falling into the old patterns you are seeking to escape?

Activity 17

Please describe and discussion with your counselor the kind of lifestyle you would like to live in regard to your.

- Life in your family

- Life at work

- Relationship with friends

- Entertainment activities

Does your description of the lifestyle you hope to achieve fit with what God wants for you? Discuss your answers with your counselor. Just how do you contemplate making changes so that you will have the above lifestyle?

Activity 18

Describe any other changes in your lifestyle that you need to make. Be sure to include any changes in regard to persons with whom you spend considerable time and charges in location where you will live, work, and play. And again, discuss your ideas with your counselor.

Gain the Support of Others

It is important in your recovery that you find caring people who will help you to deal with your thoughts and feeling, including your secret desires. Beside God you will find help in the support of your minister, priest, counselor, friends, teachers, and even many strangers.

Hopefully, you will find support from your family too. However, those persons with whom you plan to share your worst secrets should be mature and solid in their Christian Faith. They also should be free of addiction unless they have been in successful recovery for a very long time. They must be persons who will understand and accept your addiction and be willing to keep your secrets. Also, they should want to give you their time, advice, and support. You must be able to share with them those events that have been and are still painful for you to remember. And do not forget to continue to share your thoughts and feelings with God. Prayer-a dialogue with God-is one of your most important sources of strength.

We know that Jesus did not struggle with an addiction, yet he shared and exhibited much wisdom that is relevant to your recovery. For example, Jesus chose only three of the 12 disciples to be his closet and trusted friends. He shared with them thoughts that he shared with no one else on earth. Peter, James, and John all had a special place in Christ's life.

Support Persons

Activity 19

Please name those individuals, (beside your counselor, your minister or priest, or God), who are likely to provide intelligent and beneficial support to you. Be sure to include even those whose support will be minimal. Discuss your reasons with your counselor.

Activity 20

Please review the names of the supports you have listed above and then list below and discuss with your counselor the three persons whose support is most critical to your recovery. Do not list anyone who was with you when you used to drink unless that person has been in recovery for a very long time. Also, remove from the list anyone whom you have blamed for addiction. And do not list anyone who is presently using alcohol or drugs. Your list should be short. And do not include your counselor or a clergy person. If you attend AA

meetings, you may include your sponsor. This will be a short list but an important one.

Do not include on your list your counselor, minister, or priest. Before you contact any of these people, however, discuss them with your counselor.

- Critical supporter #1
  _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

- Critical supporter #2
  _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

- Critical supporter #3
  _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

After discussing with your counselor the appropriateness of these persons for your recovery, it is important that you set a time to meet each one of these persons at least every other day to share your problems and achievements. Share your concerns and listen for their wisdom. Your counselor will guide you as to your sharing with others so as not to jeopardize relationships.

Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly. Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in multitude of counselor they are established. (Proverbs 15: 21-22)

Support Groups:

Depending upon your situation, support groups can have a key role to play in your recovery. In some cases, individuals counseling may be needed before participation in a recovery group is recommended. If recommended by your counselor, you may find comfort in recovery groups. You may find a kinship of understanding from people who have struggled and are struggling with the same challenges you face.

There are several different types of recovery support groups that may be appropriate for you to join. There are support groups such an Alcoholic Anonymous and more focused Christian-centered groups such as Alcohol Victorious. Discuss with your counselor the appropriateness of particular recovery group for you. This is because some persons have reached a stage of toxicity or chemical depression, or they have impairment such that they are ready for participation in a recovery group. This is why you need the impute of your counselor to determine which group, if any, is likely to be of help to you in addressing your needs.

You should be aware that most recovery groups will require a commitment from you will attend, its address, contact information, and the days and time the group meets. Then make the contact.

Activity 21

If you and your counselor agree, write down groups will require a commitment from you at least ninety day. It usually takes this much time for persons joining recovery groups to become accustomed to addressing their issues in a semipublic forum.

Your Church Is a Support Groups

Your church should have a major role in your recovery.

Forsake not the assembling of ourselves together.
(Hebrew 10:25)

Your church can and should provide you will both spiritual and social support for your recovery. Fellowship with other believers of like faith can be a great blessing to you. It is a place where you can learn more about God's loving nature and compassion for individuals like you. It also is a place where you can learn more about you need to have compassion for others, including those with destructive addiction. If, for any reason, you do not feel that your church can play a part in your recovery, you should change your church-but do not give up your faith in Christ.

Activity 22

Explain why you attend your present church. What are the sources of support in your church that will help you the most in your recovery? If you still do not have a church, now is the time to find one. Discuss this with your counselor.

Treatment Programs:

There are several types of residential and outpatient treatment programs. Residential programs are usually in a hospital or other medical care facility. These programs typically provide treatment from seven to 28 days in length, but they can run much longer. If you have been drinking for a long time you may need to have the toxic products removed from your system, and this should be done under medical supervision. After detoxification, these programs may include group therapy and individual counseling. One of the reasons for a medical examination is that many patients addicted to alcohol suffer from other diseases as well. Severe depression often accompanies addiction. Addicted persons also are sometimes bipolar or they may exhibit any one of several disease syndromes. This is one more reason why you need the advice of a professionally trained addiction counselor who may recommend a medical examination.

Most outpatient programs also involve individuals and group counseling. Some patients may attend these programs for one or a few hours a week, a few weeks, or for years.

Among outpatient programs, family recovery programs are becoming more common because addiction often creates or is the

result of family problems. Family therapy is designed to help all family members, including the addicted person. Family therapy teaches all members to realize that they are accountable for their actions and that the addicted member is – as is every member – responsible for his or her behavior. Family oriented group therapy is intended to help the group members learn and respect boundaries for themselves and to respect the boundaries of the others. It is also a way for family members to address problems in a safe setting. The idea is to break the cycle of co-dependency. Codependency often occurs in families when a member suffers from an addiction.

There are a few residential and outpatient programs that are Christian-based. Most programs, however, do not explicitly promote a Christian identity but many counselors in these programs use the principles of Christianity in their treatment.

Set Your Course of Recovery

At this point, it is assumed that you understand more fully about your addiction and that you are aware of the major obstacles you must overcome. You have some tentative plans about what you need to do and what will do to facilitate your recovery. It is now time to put it all together and make an explicit plan. You are fortunate because you, your counselor, and hopefully your minister or priest is ready to discuss with you your plans. You also know that in making this plan, you will have the advantage of your faith in Christ and the support of others.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
(Phil 3: 14)

I can do all things through Christ which strengthenth me
(Phil 4:13)

To repeat, your next task is to prepare your treatment plan with your counselor and with input from your minister or priest. Once in place, you also will need to share this plan with others who will be providing you with support. For your plan to work you will need to have *achievable goals with the details for how you will achieve these goals*. By having an explicit and practical course of action, you will help others to help you. In other words, you and others need to know how you intend to spend your time and how you will work on your recovery. Where will you go? Who will you see? What will you do when you are faced with serious temptation?

In making your plan, again reflect on the obstacles and temptations you will face and how they will be avoided or overcome. Again, consider the kind of friends or family members you will be around and how they will affect your recovery. For example, if your family members or close friends drink when you are present, what is your plan for such situation? And if you relapse, you will need a plan for that as well. You must chart your course carefully if you are to weather the obstacles you will face. Use prayer and your faith in God as a compass. Always keep in mind your Christian testimony. Take time to think about your addiction and how your behavior affects your relationship to God.

Activity 23

Describe on a separate of paper, in as much detail as possible what you plan to do when confronted by certain temptations. What are the most difficult temptations you are likely to face? Discuss this plan with your counselor.

Activity 24

Can you really count on this plan you have discussed with your counselor to work in your recovery?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why?

Activity 25

Review the 12 Step used Alcoholics Anonymous with your counselor, minister, priest, and the individuals who will support you. There is a scriptural basis for each of the 12 steps that you will find helpful. Can you recognize what the basis is for each step? This may require study on your part.

A Closing Forewarning

As you carry out the suggestions offered her and by your counselor you, will begin to feel as if you're cured and that you no longer need to focus on your recovery. Quite subtly, however, temptations will arise to test whether you can drink again. You must always bee on the alert and avoid these temptations. You must accept the fact that you can never handle all of the pressures that go with consuming alcohol or illicit drugs. Do not return to your old self. Stay with God's will.